

# Where's The Art?



For a decade, educators and policy makers have advocated standards-based reform, convinced that every child needs to reach high standards in subject areas and is capable of doing so. The theory is that student learning will improve when states set ambitious standards, align assessments to the standards, and hold schools and teachers accountable for how well students meet the expectations of the standards. It has become increasingly clear that putting these pieces in place does not, by itself, ensure that students learn. States, districts, and schools must also dedicate resources to building teachers' content knowledge and instructional skills if standards-based reform is to result in increased student achievement.

If we know that the teacher's knowledge and skills are the most important influences on how well students learn, *why isn't every child in the United States taught by a qualified art teacher?*

In many states, such knowledge and skills are not required for a teaching license. The 2001 manual from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification reports the following requirements for initial licensure in the 50 states and the District of Columbia:

- 15 states require all teachers to earn a degree in a content area (36 do not).
- 21 states require a degree in a content area for future high school teachers (30 do not).
- 12 states require a degree in education (39 do not).
- 3 states require *no* student teaching experience.
- 37 states require candidates to pass a basic skills test (14 do not).
- 14 states require tests to assess teaching performance (37 do not).
- 33 states require a subject matter exam (18 do not).

If we seriously believe that "all children can learn" and that it is our moral responsibility as educators to "leave no child behind," then we must be willing to make the decisions necessary to ensure that each child in America's schools is taught by a knowledgeable, skilled art teacher. *We need better arts education policies for our students!*

## SUPPORT IMPROVING ART EDUCATION POLICIES.

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